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18D. Yoga Promotes Relaxation in Children and Adolescents With Recurrent Headache

Focus Areas: Integrative Approaches to Care, Supporting Behavioral Change, Alleviating Pain

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Objective: Recurrent headaches are prevalent in children and adolescents. Up to 89% of these individuals identify stress as a trigger. Yoga offers a complementary and alternative method for this population who often lacks effective relaxation tools for stress relief. This presentation describes the yoga group offered as part of the Integrative Headache Clinic (IHC) at Children's Hospital Colorado. One of the objectives is to determine the effect of the yoga group for children and adolescents with recurrent headaches on pain and relaxation scores.

Description: Over the course of 18 months (January 2011 to June 2012), a retrospective chart review was conducted of 40 children and adolescents with an average age of 15 years, 62.5% of whom were female. During the first hour of clinic, every individual takes part in a 50-minute group yoga session consisting of 10 asanas that promote relaxation and pain relief. Before and after yoga group, participants rate their level of pain and relaxation on a scale from 0 to 10 (with 0 being no pain or relaxation and 10 being maximum pain or relaxation). The average "before yoga" pain score was 3.7 (\pm 3.0) and "after yoga" pain score was 3.4 (\pm 3.1) ($P=.0672$), representing a decrease in pain. The average "before yoga" relaxation score was 5.2 (\pm 2.3) and "after yoga" relaxation score was 7.5 (\pm 1.9) ($P<.0001$), representing a statistically significant increase in relaxation.

Results: Group yoga is effective in promoting relaxation in children and adolescents with recurrent headache. Yoga may offer an adjunct to common pharmaceutical options for headache management for children and adolescents.

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